DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 335 353 SP 032 266

AUTHOR Askling, Berit
TITLE Structural and Organizational Contexts of the Teaching Profession.
PUB DATE Apr 91
NOTE 17p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Chicago, IL, April 3-7, 1991).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Attitude Change; *Decentralization; Educational History; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Governance; Group Behavior; *Institutional Autonomy; Organizational Change; *Personal Autonomy; Power Structure; *Professional Autonomy; *School District Autonomy; Self Determination; Teacher Education; *Teaching (Occupation)
IDENTIFIERS Professionalism; Sweden

ABSTRACT

A conceptual framework is presented for discussing teacher autonomy in a historical perspective against the background of a profound decentralization in the Swedish educational system introduced in the early 1980s. The way teachers use a broadened space of action cannot be fully understood unless a distinction is made between private and collective autonomy. The question of where the exertion of influence stems from has to be followed by two additional questions when the autonomy of teachers, either private or collective, is discussed: In what way and by whom has influence been exerted? and Is it exerted today? When these dimensions are taken into account, Swedish decentralization seems to imply a strong appeal to the professionalism of teachers--if teachers use their collective autonomy. Opportunities to form a strong professionalism have not been considered a challenge, either for the teachers themselves or for teacher education. The traditional definition of teacher autonomy in terms of a private autonomy is still dominating. (LL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

UNIVERSITY OF LINKÖPING
Department of Education and Psychology
S- 581 83 LINKÖPING
SWEDEN

1991-04-26

ED335353

Structural and Organizational Contexts of the Teaching Profession

Berit Askling

Paper presented in the symposium "Teacher Autonomy and Teacher Cooperation- Contradictory or Complementary Aspects of the Teaching Profession"
(session 5.26) at the AERA annual meeting in Chicago in April 1991.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
B Askling
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SP033266

Abstract

In this paper the **autonomy** of teachers is discussed against the background of recent changes towards a profound **decentralization** in the Swedish educational system.

Decentralization implies a shift from centre to pheripery (or from top to down). It is argued, that the way teachers use i widened space of action cannot be fully understood unless 1) a distinction is made between a **private** and a **collective** autonomy,.and 2) two further dimensions are included in the analysis: the relative emphasis on **proactive** versus **retroactiv** influence (governance or control) and the relative influence from **internal** versus **external** forces (from professionals or politcians/users/consumers). Thus, the question of from WHERE influence is exerted has to be followed by two additional questions when the autonomy of teachers - private or collective - is discussed: In WHAT WAY and by WHOM has influence been exterted and is it exerted today?

When these dimensions are taken into account, the Swedish decentralization seems to imply a strong appeal to the **professionalism** of teachers - if teachers use their collective autonomy. Anyhow, up to now the opportunities to form a strong professionalism have not been considered a challenge, neither for the teachers themselves (with few exceptions) nor for teacher education. The traditional definition of teacher autonomy in terms of a private autonomy is still dominating.

The Symposium "Teacher Autonomy and Teacher Cooperation - Contradictory or Complementary Aspects of the Teaching Profession" - an Introduction

We[1] have given our symposium the title "Teacher Autonomy and Teacher Cooperation - Contradictory or Complementary Aspects of the Teaching Profession". Our assumption is that teachers' cooperation and team work in teacher teams cannot be understood unless the autonomy of the teaching profession is taken into account and analysed.

The idea of this symposium came up during last year's AERA meeting in Boston. In several sessions, the autonomy of teachers was brought to the fore. It was suggested by many participants that teachers need more sceduled time for cooperation and for team-work in order to be able to take a more active part in school development and in curriculum changes. It was also suggested that the professionalism of teachers could be more shaped by the teachers themselves by such changes and - hopefully - more respected by others.

Team- teaching was one of the main issues in an extensive organizational school reform in Sweden, implemented about ten years ago. This reform aimed, among other things, at giving local school units more responsibility for their own ongoing activities and developmental work. Team teaching was considered one important tool for engaging and supporting teachers in curriculum development.

From organizational literature, autonomy is often considered a desirable working condition for professionals, implying a certain amount of freedom and self-direction. However, when refering to the teaching profession, the concept autonomy is not exclusively used in a context of positive comments and associations. On the contrary, it is more often discussed in terms of loneliness and isolation of the single teacher than in terms of potential powerfulness and independence for teachers and teacher staffs.

This rather negatively perceived teacher autonomy seems to be a characteristic feature of the teaching profession today in centralistic school systems as well as in school systems where teachers have at least formally a considerable influence on curriculum and school development. Therefore, you can ask whether this kind of autonomy - in terms of isolation and loneliness - might be so embedded in our notions of schooling and teaching that it cannot be turned into a more powerful and professional autonomy - even if, formally, it would be possible. Is perhaps schooling and teaching so

---

[1] Berit Askling, PhD, professor in Education; Kjell Granström, PhD, MS in Psychology, senior lecturer; Elisabeth Ahlstrand, primary education teacher, lecturer and grauduate student; Gunnel Colnerud, MS in Psychology, lecturer and graduate student. Affiliation: Department of Education and Psychology, Linköping University, S- 581 83 Linköping, Sweden.

decision pattern, teachers cannot use their autonomy in a way that strengthen their professional power?

In this symposium we want to bring to the fore the tension between a well established notion of teaching as a private affair, as teachers' own business, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the recently launched - not from teachers themselves but from researchers and politicians - notion of a collectively shared autonomy as a mean for shaping the teacher profession and for supporting school development.

The symposium focuses on how the actual autonomy of teachers is framed by structural and organizational factors, which define the professionalism of teaching, and how the autonomy and the widened space of action is used by the teachers. The point of departure is taken in experiences from an extensive reform in the Swedish school system aiming at a decentralization of - among other things - curriculum decisions from central authorities to local working units of teachers. Due to the reform, the collective autonomy of the teacher staff was strengthened at the expense of influence from central authorities - but also partly at the expense of the private autonomy of the individual teacher.

It is suggested in the symposium that by examining the actual distribution of governance and control in one particular educational system and by scrutinizing how teachers use a widened space of action and an increase in potential "power", we might unveil some of those restrictions and constraints of the teaching profession that are embedded in the structure and history of educational systems. The way teachers use a certain space of action and the way teacher education defines the teaching profession may give us some hints about the real distribution of power, behind rhetorics about school development and team teaching.

The underlying question for the symposium is: Can we learn anything about the teaching profession and about schooling by loooking at teachers' use of their autonomy in educational systems that differ with regard to history and structure? Can we from such comparisons say anything about teachers' power as professionals?

Introduction to the paper
"Structural and Organizational Contexts of the Teaching Profession".

Across the years, Swedish teachers have been faced to, and their working conditions affected by, several structural and organizational changes. These changes have given teachers many opportunities for developing a strong collective autonomy, but neither the teachers themselves nor their unions have been too much eager to take these opportunities to extend the influence. On the contrary, they seem to protect teachers' private autonomy, as if a threat against this autonomy also implies a threat against their professionalism.

The purpose of the paper

The purpose of this paper is to present a rough outline of a conceptual framework for discussing the autonomy of teachers in a historical perspective. A distinciton is made between private autonomy and collective autonomy. The relative emphasis on proactive and retroactive influence (governance or control) and the relative influence from internal and external forces (from professionals or politicians/ users/ consumers) is discussed against recent trends in schools and in teacher education.

A background

In the end of the 70s, the Swedish comprehensive compulsory education system was exposed to a wide-ranging reform. The reform aimed at changing the internal work of schools by introducing a new, decentralized system of state grants, changing traditional methods and forms of work, changing established occupational roles among teachers, heads and other school staff, and introducing group-based rather than traditional individual- and subject-based organization (Berg 1989). Among other things, local school leaders were expected to reorganize the teachers' working conditions into so-called teachers' teams or working units, thus constituting "small schools" within the larger school.

Several reasons were claimed in the proposals for the reform: Decentralization was considered to be in line with the ongoing democratization of society as it gives a more equal distribution of opportunities for exerting influence. However, it was also argued for in terms of effectiveness and rational planning. Almost the same kind of arguments that were used in the 50s for the introduction of a more centralistic governance of the educational system were thirty years later used as arguments for a decentralization.

From the perspective of teachers, the reform meant that they were invited to take part in a collective curriculum planning process (when curriculum is used in its broadest sense). Thus, it can be said that the reform

meant a challenging appeal to the professionalism of the teachers. The aim of the reform, however, was not expressed in such terms, and nor was the reform met by teachers as a challenge. On the contrary, many teachers found this reform just another threat from the State - and the Socialist Party - against their autonomy and privacy. The reform was not founded on teachers' own assumptions of possessing a professional competence that ought to be taken into account for educational decision-making. The decentralization responded to political intentions of the government, not to needs identified by teachers. Thus, collaboration among teachers was not regarded as in line with the interests of the teachers, but with the ones of the government and the central administration. Therefore, by many teachers team teaching was perceived as just another idea from "above".

Parallel to this reform of the inner life of schools, there has been a radical reduction of state regulations and a shift in economic responsibility from the government to municipal boards. By such changes a local variability is introduced. However, it was suggested by the government that the nation- wide quality of schooling was now to be guaranteed by the teachers as a body of professionals and not by use of state regulations - a suggestion that implied a further another reference to the teachers' professionalism.

Due to these ongoing reforms, teachers are now given responsibility for curriculum planning, for the choice of textbooks, for the running of the working unit, for special training programmes for "problem " students, for local school development projects and for the evaluation of such projects, that means for the quality and equality of the entire school system. But, and this is important to remember for the further discussion in the paper, formally this responsibility was given to the teacher teams and not to the individual teachers. Due to the organizational reform, the teams were the receivers of the power that was decentralized.

These changes in teachers' responsibilities and space of action have given us opportunities for studying how teachers use an autonomy, that is expected to support school improvements and effectiveness.

The autonomy of teachers

An important and traditional mark of the teaching profession is the autonomy of teachers with regard to their own working situation. However, school life is - following the explanation that was outlined by Lortie (1975) - considered to involve a standardization of vocational experiences that limits teachers' initiative, creativity and intellectual stimulation. According to the currently ongoing discussions about school reforms and teacher reforms in the U S and in many European countries, schools are regarded as bureaucratic institutions that need to be altered in such a way that the quality of the teaching professions can be enhanced. Teachers' working conditions are, it is argued, deeply affected by the bureaucratic control over schools, which is incompatible with the professional autonomy of teachers (Popkewitz and Lind 1988; Rowan 1989).

The lack of professional authority among teachers has been taken as a crucial evidence for considering teachers as not fully professional. The label semi-professional has been suggested in order to underline the dependency in relation to "commissioners" and "clients" and the lack of ownership with regard to a professional base of knowledge. In order to enhance teachers' capacity for learning and problem solving, to build cohesiveness within the school and also to satisfy teachers' needs for affiliation, an array of collaborative arrangements have been introduced (Rovan sid 374).

However, the reports from such projects are not always positive. Recent experiences indicate that organizational changes aiming at strengthening the professionalism of teachers, quite contrary to what is expected, can lead to a reduction of teacher responsibility if they are followed by greater monitoring. According to Popkewitz and Lind (1988) the bureaucratic control that was expected to be reduced by such changes increased. But it was also found by Popkewitz and Lind that many teachers accept this monitoring. The introduction of new evaluation criteria created a common language for all teachers and gave them a feeling that their professionalism was strengthened. However, from the researchers' point of view it could be argued that this language *created a poverty of expressions of their knowledge. .....The importance of aesthetics, the playfulness of experiences, and the use of intuition were lost* (Popkewitz and Lind 1988, p 29). Popkewitz and Lind conclude that the project they followed. It actually reduced teachers' autonomy and redefined their responsibility as the external control - an already predominant issue in the US school system - was increased.

Private and collective autonomy

Apparently, in the Swedish case, decentralization doesn't mean just the transmission of responsibility and influence but also the introduction of collective decisions and teachers' participation in a collective, and thus illustrates the decentralization paradox. A decentralization may cause a reduction of the privacy of teachers, as they are requested to take into account views and suggestions of others before making decisions about their own working conditions. From the point of view of the individual teacher a decentralization can be perceived as an increase in influences from outside. (If there is a sharp division of labour between highly specialisted functionaries in a centralistic organization there is room for privacy for each one in the bottom of a centralistic system, compare to Bernstein's reasoning about "framing" and "collection code", Bernstein 1975).

In order to take into account this decentralization paradox, we have to make a distinction between a private autonomy of the individual teacher and a collective autonomy given to teachers in working units. In order to understand the possible tension, or conflict, between the ingrained private autonomy and the recently gained collective autonomy it is necessary to make a closer scrutiny of how influence has been, and nowadays is, distributed and dispersed in the educational system.

Proactive or retroactive influence

Decentralization and evaluation may be regarded as two parts of a "communicating vessel". As was pointed out in the study by Popkewitz and Lind (1988) and has been stressed in the research literature over the years, decentralization is often followed, openly or more hidden, by an increase in evaluation activities. (Kogan 1988, Lundgren 1988, Weiler 1991). Influence that is not exerted prior to the activity (in terms of governance and steering by prescriptions, rules, regulations) can be exerted afterwards (in terms of assessment or evaluation). (Sometimes, the influence is exerted during the activity as an inspection.) Thus, from the perspective of an individual teacher, the autonomy, whether it is private or collectively shared by colleagues, may be perceived very differently according to the temporal appearance of the influence that is exerted. We have to make a distinction between proactive and retroactive influence, between prescriptions of varying kinds and inspections, evaluations and assessments.

In Sweden, the decentralization was launched as a democratic shift from a formalistic and hierarchic goal-regulation steering to a more dynamic and progressive goal-outcome steering. But due to the long tradition of centralistic governance and a confidence in prescriptions and regulations, there was no familiarity with accountability and evaluation strategies on the system level. Level of standards, national uniformity and equality of worth of leaving marks have by tradition been guaranteed by the profound proactive steering and not by any large scale assessments from which data could be collected for system evaluations. It is worth noticing, for the further discussion, that the decentralization was not immediately followed by an increase in control. On the contrary, there was - and still is - great confusion about how to accomplish evaluations and exert control on the system level.

Besides, over the years from the 50s, when the centralistic governance was at its peak, and without any requests for assessments of students to contribute to any system evaluations, the assessment procedures in school were gradually "humanised". The negative effects of assessments and examinations were well described, particularly during the 70s, and for several years alternative forms for assessments were suggested and tried out in compulsory school, upper secondary school and also in higher education. The abolishment of traditional assessment methods went hand in hand with - and were in fact the consequences of - the adoption of new, more progressive, pedagogical ideas. The development of this more "soft" assessment policy is described by Henricson (1987). During the 1970s, students reacted against the shortcomings and the negative effects of all kinds of tests, and many teachers joined them in their criticism. The main arguments in the debate was that tests and examinations were inconsistent with the general goals laid down for the Swedish educational system. Nation-wide tests, constructed by the National Board of Education with the purpose of giving teachers help to compare their students to a national standard, were also criticized. As a result of the debate at that time, testings

and examination activities were reduced or abolished on all levels in the educational system. There was no "market" for national tests and, according to Henricson, *the baby was thrown out with the bath-water* (p32).

With regard to the choice of methods, content and textbooks, Swedish teachers have been more restricted than teachers in the US, but with regard to the assessment of the students they got a heavy responsibility. They were not exposed to controlling activities from authorities, from school administrators or from staff members.

The elaboration of a strong proactive steering made a formalisation of the control unnecessary. Teachers got directions about goals, content and methods, and were trusted to be their own controllers of their outcomes. The retroactive influence could to a great extent be kept in the hands of the individual teacher. From such a point of departure, the development towards decentralization actually gave the teachers an opportunity to "take the floor", but very few teachers did so.

Internal and external influence

It was mentioned earlier that the decentralization, paradoxically, could be perceived as an increase in influence from outside the individual teacher. This brings us to take another aspect into consideration: The agent of influence and the relative influence from internal and external agents.

A predominant feature in the Swedish educational system has always been, and still is, the lack of direct influence from local politicians and parents, that means from representatives of "orderers" and "consumers" outside school. By the introduction of teacher teams the professional responsibility of the working units is kept in the hands of the professionals, although it to some extent has passed over from the individual teacher to a collective of teachers.

There are historical reasons for this kind of "internalism" of the system, that ought to be pointed out:

In the 17 th century, State grammar schools were established in the cathedral cities. In a way that is hard to imagine today, the administration and superintendency were exerted by the Church (the well consolidated Lutheran State church). Chapters and bishops appointed and dismissed teachers, decided on textbooks etc.

In the middle of the last century, an elementary and compulsory school system was introduced by the Parliament. It was established as a genuine local obligation with regard to economy, and under the supervision of the Church with regard to content and methods. The curriculum of was simple and straightforward: God, the King, and the Country.

Considering goals, aims and students, these two parallel school systems differed fundamentally. Considering the governance, however, the systems were very much alike. They were both run under the superintendency of local church representatives, although there was a

difference in status of the representatives in the cathedral cities and the country parish. With regard to daily administration the educational system was decentralized, but with regard to ideology and rithuals it was in the hands of a State institution with a nation-wide uniformity.

In the beginning of this century the hegemony of the church was questioned by liberal politicians, who wanted the curricula in the two school forms to be modernised by the introduction of natural sciences and foreign language at the expense of religion (in grammar school Latin as well). By forming National Boards for grammar school and for elementary school, the administrative influence from the church was broken and a formal platform for a central administration of political intentions about schooling was established and institutionalized. These two boards were brought together in one National Board of Education in 1919, which gradually increased its governance of compulsory schools and upper secondary schools. Thus, the Church was succeded by the Government as the ideological leader, and by the State as the administrative leader of the system. Notions of uniformity and nation-wide equality were kept intact, despite the fact that the local administration was replaced by a centralistic one. Thus, from the perspective of the teachers, the agents of influence on schooling have always represented the public and the hegemony of society (the State Church or the State).

When teachers were no longer exposed to personal supervision from church representatives, they got gradually more exposed to state regulations and prescriptions. Accordingly, the direct relationship between teachers and their mandators (that had given opportunities for positive as well as for negative feedback) was replaced by an impersonal and indirect relationship to the State as the one and single mandator. As the State also took over the responsibility for in- service training, which originally had been one of the major tasks for the teachers' own unions, the unions more exclusively focused on tangible and material issues, such as salaries, teaching duties etc.

As this brief historical outline shows, neither politicians nor parents have, across the years, exerted any direct and personal influence on teachers. You can say that the influence has been much more internal than external in character. During the expansion of the school system from the 50s and ahead, external market forces, parents' will and claims from local politicians for accountability have exerted influence on the school system, but in a way that affected the system at large and not directly the individual teacher. To a great extent, the Socialist Party has been regarded by teachers and the public, and also condidered itself, as the "owner" of the school reform ideas and, consequently, also as the scapegoat for possible failures. Within the school system, the individual teachers have been "protected" by their administrators and by their unions.

Thus, the privacy of teacher has increased, due to a reformistic policy and to sucessful teacher unions, but so has also the feelings of isolation and powerlessness.

Responses from teacher education to new demands.

A decentralization, that implies a trust in the professionalism of teachers as a guarantee for a nation wide equality of standards, and that is not accompanied by a simultaneously introduced centralistic control, also implies an appeal to teacher education. Prospective teachers need to get "tools" for being enable to exert the influence formally given to them.

By examining the study programmes in teacher education we can get some evidence for imagining how the professionalism of teachers is shaped by teacher education today. Such an examination - in terms of a survey of local study programme documents - has recently been undertaken (Askling, Ahlstrand and Colnerud 1991) and gives some hints for suggesting what are the local intentions for the programmes and what kind of professionalism the programmes are preparing for.

Anyhow, first some brief information about teacher education in Sweden: Due to an extensive organizational reform in 1977, all post secondary education was brought together in a new higher education system. There were several reasons for this reform: to allow for a more effective planning of State resources by creating a uniform educational system and a centrally administrated admission system. There were other reasons as well: To give a more prestigious status to the vocationally training programmes (such as teacher training programmes) and to offer prospective students a better overview of post secondary education opportunities, thus hopefully decreasing existing social and gender differences in admission rate to the programmes.

The uniformity in organization and admission rules was combined with an extensive decentralization of the responsibility for resources, curriculum and student examination. The decentralisation was meant to give room for flexibility and creativity in higher education and, in doing so, for meeting new demands from the labour market and society at large.

The reform did not mean a change in structure and content of the training programmes. Anyhow, in 1985 the Swedish Parliament (Riksdag) passed a Bill on a new teacher training scheme for the nine year compulsory school. A general study programme was drawn up with two different specializations, one for teaching in grades 1-7, the other for grades 4-9. Teacher training for grades 1-7 lasts for three and a half years and the training for grades 4-9 lasts for four and a half years. The point of departure for the reform of teacher training was the current demands on the compulsory school and its curriculum that were discussed earlier in this paper. The new study programme for teacher training were implemented in 1988.

This teacher training reform, aiming at getting the training programmes in line with current demands in compulsory school, was to be implemented in a extensively decentralised higher education organisation where local programme committees (with representatives from teacher educators, students and schools) and individual teacher educators got a key

role in designing the programmes and, consequently, also in defining the professionalism of teachers. Therefore, a scrutiny of the training programmes may give us some information about how the professionalism of teachers is interpreted and how prospective teachers are prepared for using their potential power.

What kind of professionalism has been outlined and what kind of preparation does teacher education offer today? The examination of local study programmes, recently undertaken by Askling et al (1991), gives some answers. In this investigation local programme plans (the written curricula) were studied. In addition to written local documents, reports from current local evaluation and research studies focussing on teacher educators' goal interpretations were collected and studied. It ought to be pointed out that the examination did not include an inspection or evaluation of the lessons in the programmes (and we are well aware of the fact that a written curriculum does not always - or seldom - correspond to the curriculum created in the classroom).

What did we find? How does teacher education respond? What kind of professionalism is outlined?

Firstly, from local evaluation studies and research projects we leart that there is a great heterogeneity among teacher educators with regard to their belief systems and goal interpretations. This lack of consensus was also apparent in the plans, although partly hidden behind a rethoric of progressiveness. We dare say that teacher education is carried out without any concensus about the ultimate goals for teacher education and for schooling. Apparently, there is no commonly shared opinion of what is the core of the teaching profession. Some teacher educators underline the fostering duties of a teacher, others the respect that must be paid to the cultural heritage in school subjects. In short, the professionalism of teaching may either be linked to the mastery of subject knowledge or to the mastery of pedagogical skills for work with groups of children. In every teacher training institution, the variation in opinions is large. Thus, the students (the prospective teachers) are exposed to a lot of competing and contradictory messages about what is the core of the profession and the mission of the teacher training programme.

Secondly, behind the construction of the new unified teacher training programme was a traumatic melting together of hitherto separated training programmes. However, there was strategies for escaping from potential conflicts during this melting process. Extensive references were made to didactics in a vocabulary borrowed from cognitive and constructivistic psychology. Apparently, by use of this didactic approach, teacher educators were able to avoid the politically loaded questions about knowledge structure, curriculum selection, and education ideology. They could escape to a more safe ground by referring to research on teacher and student thinking. This didactic movement offered a way of escaping from the value loaded question of "Teaching, for what reasons ?"

Thirdly, and of crucial importance in the context of this symposium, we found very little in the programmes of teaching in "curriculum theory" and "evaluation theory" and "practice" as preparation for participating in local school development. We found a confusion among teachers educators about how to introduce special education, a confusion that unveiled very divergent opinions about how children with difficulties ought to be treated. With respect to what is a new - and up to now not a common part of the teaching profession and therefore not very well exposed to the teacher students during the practical training - teacher education is by no means a spokesman for a better practice. On the contrary, it can be said that the training programmes are not dealing with that kind of knowledge and training that teachers need in order to be able to use their collective autonomy in a powerful way.

Thus, our examination of teacher education indicates that in creating the training programmes, teacher educators so far have been more busy in protecting as much as possible of the content of the former training programmes than in acting as spokesmen for a new professionalism of tomorrow's teachers. Such new issues as "reflectiveness in teaching", "teacher thinking", "student autobiographies" are mentioned as new and highly relevant issues in teacher education. However, so far, such issues, if adopted, apparently are implemented within the traditional framework of a private teacher autonomy. Teacher education is still mainly directed towards a preparation for individualistic teaching activities behind the closed classroom door.

A decentralization without risk taking

With one point of departure taken in an examination of the autonomy of Swedish teachers it is suggested in this paper that structural and historical frames must be taken into consideration when organizational changes are implemented with the purpose of strengthening the professionalism of teachers.

With another point of departure taken in a recent survey of teacher education it is suggested that the decentralization in the Swedish school system, so far, is implemented without any "risk taking" from the state. The traditional view of the teaching profession as a one- person job is strongly embedded in teacher education, and the potential power of the collective autonomy is not yet discovered in the programmes. Neither curriculum and evaluation theory nor preparation for school developmental work are predominant issues in the training programmes. Prospective teachers are not prepared for adopting their collective autonomy and for using it in a way that can give them a real influence on their own working conditions. Teacher education does not act as a spokesman for a more profound professionalisation of teaching.

This brings us to consider the idea of decentralization in a system like the Swedish one:

The notion of decentralization seems, according to Weiler (1990), to command a great deal of attention in countries that have a centralistic structure of governance, in spite of considerable difficulties in agreeing on what it actually means in practice. Decentralization is advocated on grounds of enhancing participation, increasing efficiency, and making learning more relevant. Although the arguments that are most commonly advanced in advocating greater decentralization in educational governance make some sense in the abstract, it turns out, following Weiler, on closer inspection that all of them encounter substantial difficulties on either theoretical grounds or in terms of implementation. The question that Weiler raises is why decentralization, despite these difficulties, continues to be so attractive for politicians in so many countries. Weiler suggests the following answers: For politicians decentralization may function as conflict management and as a compensation for loss of legitimation.

The Swedish invitation to local participation and to a more profound professionalism among teachers was directed towards teachers who work in a school system, where their private autonomy with regard to the the assessment of students performance and thereby also of their own teaching oucomes is strong. (In this respect, they have an autonomy that is strong compared to the one in the U.S.)

Due to the decentralization, teachers now formally have got a strong collective autonomy and, thus, a potential for taking a powerful position within the school system. But, when teacher education is scrutinized, it was found that its role as a spokesman for at new professionalism is not articulated. Teacher educators do not share so much of a common interpretation of what are the crucial goals for teacher education today, that they can profile teacher education in such a way that the students get one common message. The profession, shaped by teacher education, is the traditional and conflict free one and rather diffuse with respect to the potential power of collective work. Thus, teacher education does not offer any active support for chaning the traditional pattern of autonomy.

Conclusion

Obviously, there are historical reasons for the sparsely use of a collective autonomy among Swedish teachers:

a) The professionalism of teachers has by tradition been framed by a proactive and internal steering. The private autonomy of teachers has been very strong, but has not been taken into account by teachers as a way of exerting professional power. It is suggested, that at least partly, this is due to a development that, over the years, gradually turned the relation between teachers and their mandators in a more formal and impersonal direction.

b) The decentralization in the school system, introduced ten years ago, was accomplished in a way that implied a change towards a collective autonomy of teachers, but this kind of autonomy may be perceived by the

teachers themselves as a threat against the ingrained habit of private autonomy (The decentralization paradox).

c) Decentralization was argued for in terms of desired system effects, such as flexibility, creativity and efficiency of the system. The consequences of a decentralization was neither argued for and nor explained from the perspective of the individual teachers.

The so far slow adoption of the potential power for teachers in a decentralized organization can also indicate a more general condition: Schools are not operating in a social vacuum. Maybe, from a political point of view, decentralization is introduced as long as it implies a diffusion of power, but not if it implies a location and concentration of power to one particular interest. Maybe, the social, economic and cultural structure of a welfare state today, does not "allow" a school system to be a strong and independent force in society. Maybe, teachers have seen through the invitation to participation, and are not willing to give up their private autonomy for a much more diffuse and uncontrollable collective autonomy.

Under what conditions then, do teachers actually use their collective autonomy for an empowering of their situation? The other papers presented in this symposium give some suggestions for answering that question.

References

Askling, B (1988): *Decentralization and Quality Control.* UHÄ-FoU . Projektrapport 1988:1. The National Board for Universites and Colleges.

Askling, B (1990): External Influences on Swedish Higher Education Curricula. *Higher Education Management.* Vol. 2. Nr 1.

Askling, B, Ahlstrand, E and Colnerud, G (1991): *En likvärdig lärarutbildning?* (A Teacher Education of Equal Worth?) UHÄ-rapport 1991 (in press). The National Board of Universities and Colleges. Stockholm.

Berg, G (1989): Educational reform and teacher professionalism. *Journal of Curriculum Studies.* Vol. 21. No 1. (53-60).

Bernstein, B (1975): *Class, Codes, and Control.* Vol. 3. Towards a Theory of Educational Transmission. Routledge and Kegan. London.

Henricson, S-E (1987): *Skolöverstyrelsens provöversikt.* (The Testing Programme of the National Board of Education): Skolöverstyrelsen. R-87:3. Stockholm.

Kogan, M (1988): *Education Accountability. An Analytic Overview.* Hutchinson. London.

Lortie, D (1975): *Schoolteacher.* University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Lundgren, U (1987): *New Challenges for Teachers and their Education.* Standing Conference of European Ministers on Education. OECD M ED 15-5. Strasbourg.

Lundgren, U (1988): *Decentralisation and Evaluation.* Unpublished manuscript.

Popkewitz, T and Lind, K (1988): *Teacher Incentives as Reforms: Teachers' Work and the Changing Control Mechanism in Education.* University of Wisconsin- Madison. September 20, 1988. Unpublished paper.

Rowan, B (1990): Commitment and Control: Alternative Strategies for the Organizational design of Schools. In Cazden, C.B (ed) (1990): *Review of Research in Education.* Vol. 16. (353-398).

Weiler, H (1990): Comparative Perspectives on Educational Decentralization: An Exercise in Contradictions. *Educational Evcaluation and Policy Analysis.* Vol. 12 Nr 4. (433-448).